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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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Gaza Turmoil

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Key Stories in the Media:  
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Please Note: Block Quotes Only Today, June 14, 2007  
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## Gaza Turmoil:

### Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "But the Hamas takeover in Gaza has a positive aspect for Olmert: there is no chance Bush will present a new initiative with the Palestinians during their meeting in 10 days."

Military correspondent Roni Shaked wrote in the mass-circulation, popular Yediot Aharonot: "It is clear that the new Hamas reality in Gaza has passed the point of no return. There is no one to stop them. The United States, and Israel as well, would be deluded to think that Abu Mazen and his regime can still be saved."

Columnist Yael Paz-Melamed wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "Perhaps soon, we will manage to leave Gaza finally and truly. We will leave this dubious pleasure to the countries of European Union and to the US, and we will erect a real barrier, physical and mental, between us and all the factions and the camps and the families and the disputes and the blood feuds, because of which and out of which the civil war there broke out. Yet there is still one small problem: the world is not all that ready to take the Gaza Strip on itself."

### Block Quotes:

#### I. "Olmert's Problem"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (06/14): "Olmert's problem is that he does not have a lot of time to celebrate [Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak's victory]. The waiting periods -- until the release of the interim Winograd report, to the Labor primary, to the election of the president, and the appointment of the new ministers -- are coming to an end. At its completion the prime minister will have to do what he does not like to do: present the public with a new and convincing agenda that would explain where the country is now heading. His options are not great. The Syrian track is blocked. The Gaza Strip has turned into Hamastan. It is hard to present Mahmoud Abbas as a convincing partner in a diplomatic solution, following the blow he received in the Strip. The national mood will only grow darker in view of the security threats, in the north, the south and the east -- in Iran. But the Hamas takeover in Gaza has a positive aspect for Olmert: there is no chance Bush will present a new initiative with the Palestinians during their meeting in 10 days. Olmert said this week that he is leaning toward a policy of containment in the Gaza Strip. If the West is concerned over the implications of the Hamas takeover, then they are welcome to deal with it with an international force."

#### II. "Two States for Two People"

Military correspondent Roni Shaked wrote in the popular, mass-circulation Yediot Aharonot (06/14): "Fatah in the Gaza Strip has collapsed, gone bankrupt.... Within the commotion, Hamastan is being established on the ruins of the Palestinian entity.... It is clear that the new Hamas reality in Gaza has passed the point of no return. There is no one to stop them. The United States, and Israel as well, would be deluded to think that Abu Mazen and his regime can still be saved.... Abu Mazen, detached from reality, lives in the past, ignores the present and has not planned for the future.... One of the strategic outcomes of Hamas's victory in Gaza is the creation of two Palestinian areas living separately, with a different reality and different leadership. The Palestinians are seeing their nightmare emerge before their eyes -- separation between Gaza and the West Bank, two states for one people. This situation is not good for Israel. It can even be said that it is bad for us.... Israel did nothing to strengthen the moderate camp, Olmert's meetings with Abu Mazen were futile and debasing. Israel did not have, and still lacks today, a long-term policy on Gaza. This vacuum was filled by Hamas.... The new outcome is a Hamas government in Gaza with which Israel will not be able to cooperate, but will also not be able to ignore its needs, for it will be forced to continue to look after the population, and fulfill its needs."

Israel, even if it greatly wants to do so, cannot disengage from Gaza at this stage, but certainly does not want to return to there. A temporary solution might be an international intervention force that would be mainly Arab. But the conundrum of the densely-populated strip of land in Israel's southwestern corner has become much more complicated and complex this week."

### III. "Their Gaza"

Columnist Yael Paz-Melamed wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (6/14): "Two days ago, in a conversation that Ehud Olmert held with the Dutch foreign minister, our real process of disengagement from Gaza may have begun. In that conversation, Olmert raised an idea, which was more of a request, to have a multi-national force -- UNIFIL, in our language -- along the Philadelphi Road in Rafah.... Whereas until now we were unwilling even to consider having a UN force in the Gaza Strip, now a far-reaching step is being mooted, even though it is played down by saying that this should be considered, and maybe, etc.... It is difficult to overstate the importance of this proposal, and how revolutionary it is. For the first time, Israel realizes that all its tanks and helicopters and planes are irrelevant in the bloody civil war taking place at this time in the Gaza Strip.... Basically ... Israel came to the same realization that it came to, again very belatedly, in Lebanon. There's nothing for us to seek there. Therefore, we have to disengage. Completely. Not leave behind any traces of responsibility or commitment.... Perhaps soon, we will manage to leave Gaza finally and truly. We will leave this dubious pleasure to the countries of European Union and to the US, and we will erect a real barrier, physical and mental, between us and all the factions and the camps and the families and the disputes and the blood feuds, because of which and out of which the civil war there broke out. Yet there is still one small problem: the world is not all that ready to take the Gaza Strip on itself."

JONES